NASA, entrepreneurs developing biotechnology plan for ISS

NASA photo by Jim Taylor

Shown at a question-and-answer opportunity at the conclusion of the successful ISS Entrepreneural Paradigm workshop are (left to right) Lynn Harper, scientific lead for integrative studies at NASA Ames' Astrobiology and Space Research Directorate; Ames Center Director G. Scott Hubbard; Dr. Cheryl Nickerson, associate professor of microbiology and immunology at Tulane University's Health Science Center; Bruce Pittman, Profit Engineering and the Silicon Valley Space Club; and Alan Marty, executive-in-residence at the venture capital arm of JP Morgan Partners.

NASA, space service providers, scientists and business executives met in Santa Clara on June 21 and 22 to evaluate the business case and feasibility of a new entrepreneurial paradigm with a focus on biotechnology for the International Space Station (ISS).

"Until recently, the business case for commercial endeavors on the ISS was not compelling, " said NASA Ames Center Director G. Scott Hubbard. "But recent information shows that the space environment and the ISS may offer an important, and as yet undeveloped, new intellectual property arena for biotech. Emerging launch industries, advances in biotech, improvements in automation and innovative concepts for returning samples from space offer new opportunities to solve the throughput problem that has been the major impediment to space biotech development."

A formal report from the workshop will be presented to NASA Administrator Mike Griffin by mid-July, 2005.